



Montgomery goes alone against immigration enforcement

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ANNAPOLIS - Montgomery County is the only jurisdiction in Maryland opposing legislation that would give state police the power to nab illegal immigrants.

"We have always opposed forcing local police to become enforcement agents for Immigration and Customs Enforcement," Sheila Sprague, spokeswoman for the county's Office of Intergovernmental Relations, said in written testimony. "The immigration issue should be resolved at the federal level, not at the state or local level."


But elsewhere in Maryland, counties are establishing programs to detain illegal immigrants.

Also in Annapolis

» Sen. Robert A. Zirkin withdrew an amendment that would permit direct wine shipping in Maryland after legislators argued it would kill the underlying bill.

» Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr. took a jab at the Montgomery County delegation when no lawmakers opposed a bill co-signed by every Montgomery lawmaker. "Montgomery County wins again," Miller quipped, when no senators stood to debate the bill, which would waive the fiscal 2010 maintenance of effort penalty -- an education payment that Montgomery failed to make last year. "It's unbelievable. It's like a gun holding up the state."

» The Senate passed the Maryland False Health Claims Act of 2010, which would help Marylanders identify and penalize health care providers who try to defraud the system.



Prince George's County police conduct interviews upon detainment to determine immigration status, while Frederick County uses 287(g), a federal program that allows local police officers to arrest illegal immigrants.

Del. Patrick L. McDonough, R-Baltimore and Harford counties, wants to unify Maryland's efforts against illegal immigration with a bill mandating 287(g) across the state. The bill would require a select number of state police to undergo four weeks of training with ICE.

"You send a clear and powerful signal when you have 287(g) in your state," McDonough said.

He said Maryland -- and particularly Montgomery County -- would see an influx of illegals if Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell requires the Old Dominion to implement 287(g), as he promised in his gubernatorial campaign.

Del. Susan C. Lee, D-Bethesda, said she is concerned the Maryland bill would encourage racial profiling.

"How would an official be able to determine if someone has an immigration status without racial profiling?" she asked. She said the bill would create a dangerous rift -- and discourage communication -- between illegals and law enforcement.

"[Illegals] aren't just criminals, they are also victims," she said.

Frederick County Sheriff Charles Jenkins said everyone who is detained gets the immigration status shakedown in his county.

"This is not profiling, this is not discriminatory," he said. "Very simply, it's keeping our streets safe from foreign-born criminals and terrorist threats. No one will slip through the cracks."

Maryland State Police said the program would be costly and force police to work overtime.

A fiscal analysis estimated the program would cost nearly \$600,000 in the first year and about \$150,000 annually after that.

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Read more at the Washington Examiner:

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/local/Montgomery-goes-alone-against-immigration-enforcement-88968757.html#ixzz0j7Htgri2>